

have been fortunate to have had him call New Haven home for so long.

Though we are all sad to see the doors of Derek Simpson Goldsmith close, I am honored to have this opportunity to rise and thank him for sharing his talents with us for so many years. As he begins this new life chapter, I am honored to extend my very best wishes to Derek, his wife, Pamela, as well as their family, for many more years of health and happiness. I thank him for bringing so much joy to so many lives.

RECOGNIZING DAN WILLIAMS

HON. BRITTANY PETERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Ms. PETERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Teller County Commissioner Dan Williams for receiving the 2025 Wagon Boss Award from the Woodland Park Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber's highest honor, the Wagon Boss Award, is given to those with a lifetime of service defined by integrity, mentorship, and civic leadership. From his youth mentorship to nonprofit leadership, Williams embodies these principles.

Dan is a highly decorated, 30-year combat veteran and servant leader who has honorably served his country through multiple overseas deployments and continued that commitment by serving his community at home. As a County Commissioner, he has served as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) and been a staunch advocate for fellow veterans. Dan has been an active member of the community, serving on a variety of boards and organizations, including the Colorado Wildlife Council, VFW Post 6051, El Pomar Foundation, and the Congressional District 7 Veterans Advisory Board. His vision for the future has helped drive year-over-year economic development, a drop in crime, and infrastructure investments that prepare Teller County for the future.

On behalf of the people of Colorado's 7th Congressional District, I am honored to congratulate Teller County Commissioner Dan Williams for his recognition as the Woodland Park Chamber of Commerce's 2025 Wagon Boss.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM B. ADKINS

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Mr. William "Bill" Adkins as he departs service to this body to assume the role of Principal Deputy Director for the National Reconnaissance Office. Over the past 40 years, Bill has honorably served the United States in both the executive and legislative branches as well as in the private sector. As we "snap the chalk line" on this chapter of Bill's service, I am pleased to honor his dedicated service as a professional staff member for the United States House of Representatives, Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Defense.

Bill's road to the House of Representatives began with completion of his undergraduate degree at The George Washington University here in Washington, D.C., where he majored in mechanical engineering. Bill worked for four years as a spacecraft systems engineer for the Naval Research Laboratory on various defense research space programs before joining the National Reconnaissance Office, for the first time, as a project manager and systems engineer in 1990. In these roles, Bill oversaw numerous classified research and development projects, matured technology across several intelligence methods or "INTs", including geospatial intelligence, signals intelligence, and measurement and signature intelligence. Perhaps as importantly, Bill learned firsthand that the Department of Defense and Intelligence Community are "consistently inconsistent" in the administration of policies and procedures, and that the legendary United States Navy Admiral Hyman Rickover may have been right when he testified that program managers, "have only the shallowest knowledge of the theory of the techniques they much deal with and little experience with the practical problems involved."

Bill culminated his initial tour at the National Reconnaissance Office with a fellowship in the United States Senate for Senator Spencer Abraham of Michigan. After overseeing defense and national security issues for the senator, in 2000 Bill joined the House of Representatives as the staff director for the Committee on Science, Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics. It is in this capacity that Bill's path first crossed my own. As my principal advisor on all matters of civil space, Bill was my eyes, ears, and voice on the annual budget request for the National Aeronautic and Space Administration—better known as NASA—and other civil space agencies, which totaled over \$16 billion at the time.

After six years of service to the Committee on Science, Bill ventured into the private sector and started a consulting business. For nearly a decade, he advised aerospace and defense chief executives on policy and legislative strategy, business development, and strategic planning.

In 2016, Bill again heeded the call to service in the House of Representatives. This time for the Committee on Appropriations, where our paths would again cross. Bill began his tenure on Surveys and Investigations, a unique bipartisan team charged to deeply review topics raised by both the chair and ranking member of an appropriations subcommittee. In this role, Bill investigated several Department of Defense programs and drafted reports, recommendations, and studies based on the results. After two years, Bill was hired onto the Subcommittee on Defense. Over his eight years with the subcommittee, Bill oversaw an expansive and critical portfolio that included the United States Space Force, National Reconnaissance Office, National Security Agency, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, and United States Space Command. In total, these programs account for over \$50 billion of the annual defense appropriations act.

As the committee's subject matter expert on space, Bill provided me, and the chairs before me, with sage counsel on the creation and development of the Space Force. "The problem with space is on the ground," was Bill's refrain at many a meeting with members of the committee and senior department officials alike,

And as pithy as it sounds, Bill is right. The Space Force, or any department or agency, cannot adequately provide for the Nation's defense if it hasn't invested in the critical infrastructure and foundational capabilities necessary to ensure exquisite technologies actually work for the warfighter.

As Bill begins his new role, I would be remiss if I did not note the tremendously positive impact he has had on me, other members of the committee, and the entire defense appropriations staff. Bill's positive attitude, infectious spirit, and deep knowledge have been critical to the committee over some of the most challenging appropriations cycles in recent memory. Bill has often said that there is nothing that cannot be accomplished in the Pentagon with the right memo over the right signature. I expect that Bill is now that "right signature" and I look forward to seeing what he will accomplish for the National Reconnaissance Office, the Department of Defense and Intelligence Community, and a grateful Nation. I join my colleagues today in recognizing and commending Bill for his service to our country and wish him the best in his new role.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF ELLIE THRELKEL

HON. SCOTT FRANKLIN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Mr. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of a remarkable public servant from Winter Haven, Florida, Ms. Ellie Threlkel, who passed away in February 2026 at the age of 88.

Ellie Threlkel was more than a former mayor and city commissioner. She was a pillar of the Winter Haven community and a woman who truly embodied servant leadership. Ellie served on the Winter Haven City Commission from 1988 to 1996 and was appointed mayor from 1991 to 1994. During her time in office, she demonstrated steady leadership and a deep commitment to the people she served. Her husband of 68 years, Dr. Jim Threlkel, once said that Ellie was "the city employees' commissioner and mayor." They knew she genuinely cared about them.

Her impact on Winter Haven is still felt today, particularly in the world of sports and economic development. When the Boston Red Sox left spring training in Winter Haven, it was a significant blow to the local economy. Ellie refused to let that chapter close without a fight. Following the devastation of Hurricane Andrew, she worked tirelessly to bring Major League Baseball's Cleveland Indians—now the Cleveland Guardians—to Chain of Lakes Park for spring training.

From 1993 through 2008, that partnership brought jobs, visitors, and pride to our community. Each year, Ellie proudly threw out the first pitch, often wearing her now famous gold sequined Cleveland baseball cap—just one piece of her legendary hat collection that earned her the affectionate nickname, "The Hat Lady."

But Ellie's service extended far beyond City Hall and the baseball field. She was a Girl Scout leader, a charter member of the Junior League of Greater Winter Haven, a leader in

the Garden Club, and a Ruling Elder at First Presbyterian Church. She served on boards supporting youth programs, drug prevention initiatives, hospice care, and senior living communities. In 1984, she was recognized as Winter Haven's Woman of the Year.

Even after stepping down from elected office, Ellie continued to serve on the city's Board of Adjustment and Police Pension Board. For her, public service was not a position—it was a way of life.

Born in Hawaii, educated at Vanderbilt University, and rooted in Winter Haven since 1972, Ellie led by example with a cheerful spirit and unwavering dedication to her family and her community.

She is survived by her loving husband, Jim, her daughters Kit and Peggy, her grandson Kasey, and many cherished friends and family members. She leaves behind a legacy of leadership, generosity, and civic pride that will continue to inspire generations in Winter Haven.

Mr. Speaker, communities are shaped by individuals who choose to give more than they take. Ellie Threlkel was one of those rare individuals. On behalf of Florida's 18th Congressional District, I extend my deepest condolences to the Threlkel family and my gratitude for Ellie's extraordinary life of service. May she rest in peace.

HONORING TAYLA TOLLEFSON

HON. MICHAEL BAUMGARTNER

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Mr. BAUMGARTNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate Tayla Tollefson, the Outreach Coordinator in my district office, who was crowned Miss Spokane on Sunday, February 15, 2026.

Tayla is a senior at Eastern Washington University, one of the great institutions serving students across our region and expanding opportunity throughout Eastern Washington, where she is pursuing a double major in Political Science, Pre-Law, and International Affairs, along with a minor in Psychology. After graduation, she will attend Gonzaga University School of Law, continuing the tradition of excellence and community commitment that has made Gonzaga a point of pride for so many families in Eastern Washington. Her academic dedication and leadership exemplify the hard work, talent, and community spirit that define the very best of Washington's 5th District.

The Miss Spokane Scholarship Organization is a proud local preliminary to the Miss America Organization, providing scholarships to young women while promoting academic achievement, leadership, and community engagement. Tayla's own words capture the heart of that mission. She said, "As Miss Spokane, I am deeply honored to represent a community that believes in opportunity, growth, and the power of young women to lead and inspire change."

Tayla has a clear vision for building new community partnerships, expanding opportunities, and empowering other young women to pursue their goals with confidence and purpose.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Tayla—our new Miss Spokane—and an outstanding representative of Eastern Washington.

RECOGNIZING CHRIS AND DEANA HILL OF ODYSSEY BEERWERKS

HON. BRITTANY PETERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Ms. PETERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Chris and Deana Hill of Odyssey Beerwerks for receiving the Arvada Chamber of Commerce's 2025 Entrepreneur of the Year Award.

Odyssey Beerwerks is a values-driven brewery that blends hospitality with innovation. Chris and Deana have dedicated their lives to refining beers, hosting events, and providing excellent service, all based directly on customer feedback. Chris and Deana are deeply rooted in Arvada as both residents and business owners. Chris has made a lasting impact on the local business community through his service on the Arvada Chamber of Commerce Board, where he founded the Chamber's Business Mastery Group. He has also held leadership roles with the Arvada Visitors Center Board, the Entrepreneurship KAPS Council, and the Beverage Industry Roundtable, and regularly lends his expertise on panels alongside city and county leaders.

Every year, the Entrepreneur of the Year Award recognizes the commitment, investment, and innovation of business owners in the Arvada community, and Chris and Deana's community involvement and dedication to elevating both their craft and their peers make them truly deserving of this recognition.

On behalf of the people of Colorado's 7th Congressional District, it is my honor to congratulate Chris and Deana Hill for this award and thank them for their commitment to the Arvada community.

RECOGNIZING THE POWER OF HBCUS THAT BUILT TWO LEADERS BORN A GENERATION APART

HON. TROY A. CARTER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Mr. CARTER of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, history has a way of sending us quiet reminders that the past is never truly past.

One of mine arrives every year on October 26. On October 26, 1919, a child was born in Washington, D.C. who would later help reshape American politics. His name was Edward William Brooke, III.

Forty-four years later, on that same date, October 26, 1963, I was born. Different generations. Different parts of the country. Yet our stories meet at a powerful intersection: the strength of a historically Black college and university education and the determination to lead with purpose in a Nation that has not always welcomed that leadership.

Senator Brooke's journey ran through the proud halls of Howard University. At a time when opportunity was restricted and expectations were narrow, historically Black colleges and universities stood as open doors. They did more than educate. They affirmed dignity, built confidence, and prepared students to step forward even when the world doubted them.

Howard helped prepare Brooke for a life of service. After serving his country in World War II and earning a law degree from Boston University School of Law, he entered public life with discipline and conviction. In 1966, the voters of Massachusetts elected him to the United States Senate, making him the first Black American to be popularly elected to that chamber.

That moment mattered far beyond one state. It showed that the American story could grow larger, even if slowly and unevenly. It reminded young people across the country that preparation and courage can move history forward.

Twenty-five years later, that same spirit of progress touched my own life. Like Senator Brooke, my path was shaped by an HBCU education. I graduated from Xavier University of Louisiana, an institution grounded in faith, scholarship, discipline, and service. Xavier instilled something deeper than academic knowledge. It reinforced character and responsibility. It taught that leadership is measured not by title, but by the difference one makes.

That foundation led me into public service. In 1991, exactly twenty-five years after Senator Brooke's historic election, the people of Louisiana elected me to serve in the Louisiana House of Representatives. I became the first African American to represent my district in that body.

The journey continued, one step at a time. I later had the honor of becoming the first African American elected to represent District C on the New Orleans City Council. Later still, I became the first Black state senator to represent that same community in the Louisiana State Senate.

Today, I have the privilege of serving in the United States Congress representing Louisiana's 2nd Congressional District, and as First Vice Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus. I carry those responsibilities mindful of the leaders who opened doors long before my time.

None of those milestones were about personal recognition. They were about progress. They were about making sure the doors of opportunity opened wider for those coming behind us.

Senator Brooke understood that responsibility well. During his time in the Senate, he helped shape the Civil Rights Act of 1968, strengthening protections against housing discrimination. During the Watergate crisis, he also demonstrated uncommon independence and courage by becoming the first Republican senator to call for President Richard Nixon's resignation.

That is what principled leadership looks like. Progress in America has never happened automatically. It has moved forward because people prepared themselves, believed in something larger than themselves, and kept moving even when the path was uncertain.

From the classrooms of Howard to the campus of Xavier. From neighborhoods often overlooked to the halls of government. From local service to national responsibility.

Historically Black colleges and universities have helped prepare generations of leaders for moments they could not yet see.

When I reflect on the fact that Senator Brooke and I share a birthday, and that my own historic election came twenty-five years after his, I am reminded that progress often unfolds across generations. One person